Export of Good Quality Wheat

17. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the fair price shops are not picking up wheat due to increase in price and inferior quality;

(b) whether in view of the above, Government have started the export of wheat of good quality; and

(c) the rate at which the same is being exported?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) No, Sir. As against the offtake of 32.83 lakh MTs of wheat during the year 2000-2001 (upto January, 2001), a quantity of 43.09 lakh MTs has been lifted from the Central Pool during the corresponding period in 2001-2002.

(b) and (c) In view of (a) above, questions (b) and (c) do not arise.

Unsold stock of Rubber

18. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of rubber is falling continuously for the last three years;

(b) whether it is also a faet that there are huge stocks of rubber lying unsold as a result of the slump in the market; and

(c) if so, the effect of the decision of Government to reduce further the import duty on rubber to 25 per cent on the rubber farmers of our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) During the last 3 years, the prices of rubber in the domestic maket witnessed a downward trend in tandem with the international prices. The domestic average yearly prices of Natural Rubber during

the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 were Rs. 29.97/kg. Rs. 31.25/kg. and Rs. 31.09/kg. respectively.

(b) Retention of 2 months reserve stock with manufacturers, growers and dealers including processors, is normal. Excluding this normal quantity the present stock of Natural Rubber is estimated at 62000 MT.

(c) There is no proposal to reduce the import duty on Natural Rubber.

Tannery Modernisation Fund

19. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had launched Tannery Modernisation Fund Scheme in the year, 2000;

(b) if so, the number of tanneries benefited from the Scheme alongwith the total assistance provided so far;

(c) the number of proposals of tanneries for assistance pending at present; and

(d) the fresh steps taken by the Government to provide all the incentives and infrastructure facilities for accelerated development of this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on date, 86 tanneries have been sanctioned assistance under TMS involving a total amount of Rs. 9.44 crore.

(c) Applications of 33 tanneries involving a total amount of Rs. 2.99 crore, received recently, are under process for sanction of assistance to the eligible applicants.

(d) Vaious steps are being taken/initiated for integrated development of the leather industry in India under Plan Scheme "Indian Leather Development Programme (ILDP)" and UNDP-